Council of the EU

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Council agrees position to streamline rules on Artificial Intelligence

Today the Council agreed its position on the proposal to streamline certain rules regarding **artificial intelligence (AI)**.

The proposal forms part of the so-called **"Omnibus VII"** legislative package in the EU's **simplification** agenda. The package includes proposals for two regulations aiming to simplify the EU's digital legislative framework and the implementation of harmonised rules on AI.

> Streamlining the AI rules is essential for ensuring the EU's digital sovereignty. As presidency, we worked on this proposal with urgency, reaching a swift agreement to facilitate the timely application of the AI act. The proposal will bring greater legal certainty, make the rules more proportionate and ensure more harmonised implementation across member states. We are ready to work with our co-legislators in our common efforts to support our companies, facilitate innovation and build a more competitive Europe.
>
> *Marilena Raouna, Deputy Minister for European affairs of the Republic of Cyprus*

The Commission proposed to adjust the **timeline for applying rules on high-risk AI systems** by up to 16 months, so that the rules start to apply once the Commission confirms the needed standards and tools are available. The Commission also proposed further **targeted amendments** to the AI Act that would extend certain regulatory **exemptions** granted to SMEs also to small mid-caps (SMCs), reduce requirements in a very limited number of cases, extend the possibility to process sensitive personal data for bias detection and mitigation, **reinforce the AI Office's powers** and reduce governance fragmentation.

Main amendments introduced by the Council

The presidency has treated the proposal with **utmost priority**. Member states shared the sense of urgency and, in that perspective, broadly maintained the thrust of the Commission's proposal.

The Council mandate, however, adds a new provision in the AI act, prohibiting AI practices regarding the **generation of non-consensual sexual and intimate content or child sexual abuse** material. The text also introduces a fixed timeline for the delayed application of high-risk rules: the new application dates would be **2 December 2027** for stand-alone high-risk AI systems and **2 August 2028** for high-risk AI systems embedded in products.

Furthermore, the Council mandate reinstates the **obligation for providers to register AI systems** in the EU database for high-risk systems, where they consider their systems to be exempted from classification as high-risk. It also reinstates the **standard of strict necessity** for the processing of special categories of personal data for the purpose of ensuring bias detection and correction.

In addition to these, the text **postpones** the deadline for the establishment of AI regulatory sandboxes by competent authorities at national level until **2 December 2027.** It also clarifies the **competences of the AI Office** for the supervision of AI systems based on general-purpose AI models where the model and that system are developed by the same provider by listing **exceptions** where national authorities remain competent, including law enforcement, border management, judicial authorities and financial

institutions.

Finally, the Council mandate adds a new **obligation for the Commission to provide guidance** to assist economic operators of high-risk AI systems covered by sectoral harmonisation legislation in complying with the high-risk requirements of the AI act in a manner that minimises compliance burden.

Next steps

Following today's approval of the Council's mandate, the presidency will start negotiations with the European Parliament.

Background

In October 2024, the European Council called on all EU institutions, member states and stakeholders, as a matter of priority, to take work forward, notably in response to the challenges identified in the reports by Enrico Letta ('Much more than a market') and Mario Draghi ('The future of European competitiveness'). The Budapest declaration of 8 November 2024 subsequently called for 'launching a simplification revolution', by ensuring a clear, simple and smart regulatory framework for businesses and drastically reducing administrative, regulatory and reporting burdens, in particular for SMEs.

Since February 2025, as a follow-up to the call by EU Leaders at that and subsequent meetings, the Commission has put forward ten 'Omnibus' packages aiming to simplify existing legislation on sustainability, investment, agriculture, small mid-caps, digitalisation and common specifications, defence readiness, chemical products, digital issues including on AI, environment, the automotive sector and food and feed safety. On 19 November 2025, the Commission submitted its seventh omnibus package – the Digital Omnibus, consisting of two proposals, one aiming to simplify the EU's digital legislative framework and one aiming to simplify the implementation of harmonised rules on AI. This initiative follows from a broader political objective of enhancing EU competitiveness, by reducing businesses' administrative burden and creating more favourable conditions for them to operate in the EU.

- Draft regulation on the simplification of the implementation of harmonised rules on AI (Digital omnibus on AI), Council's negotiating mandate, 13 March 2026
- Regulation on the simplification of the implementation of harmonized rules on artificial intelligence (Digital omnibus on AI), Commission proposal, 17 November 2025
- Simplification of EU rules (background information)
- Artificial intelligence act (background information)

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